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Selected Speeches and News Releases

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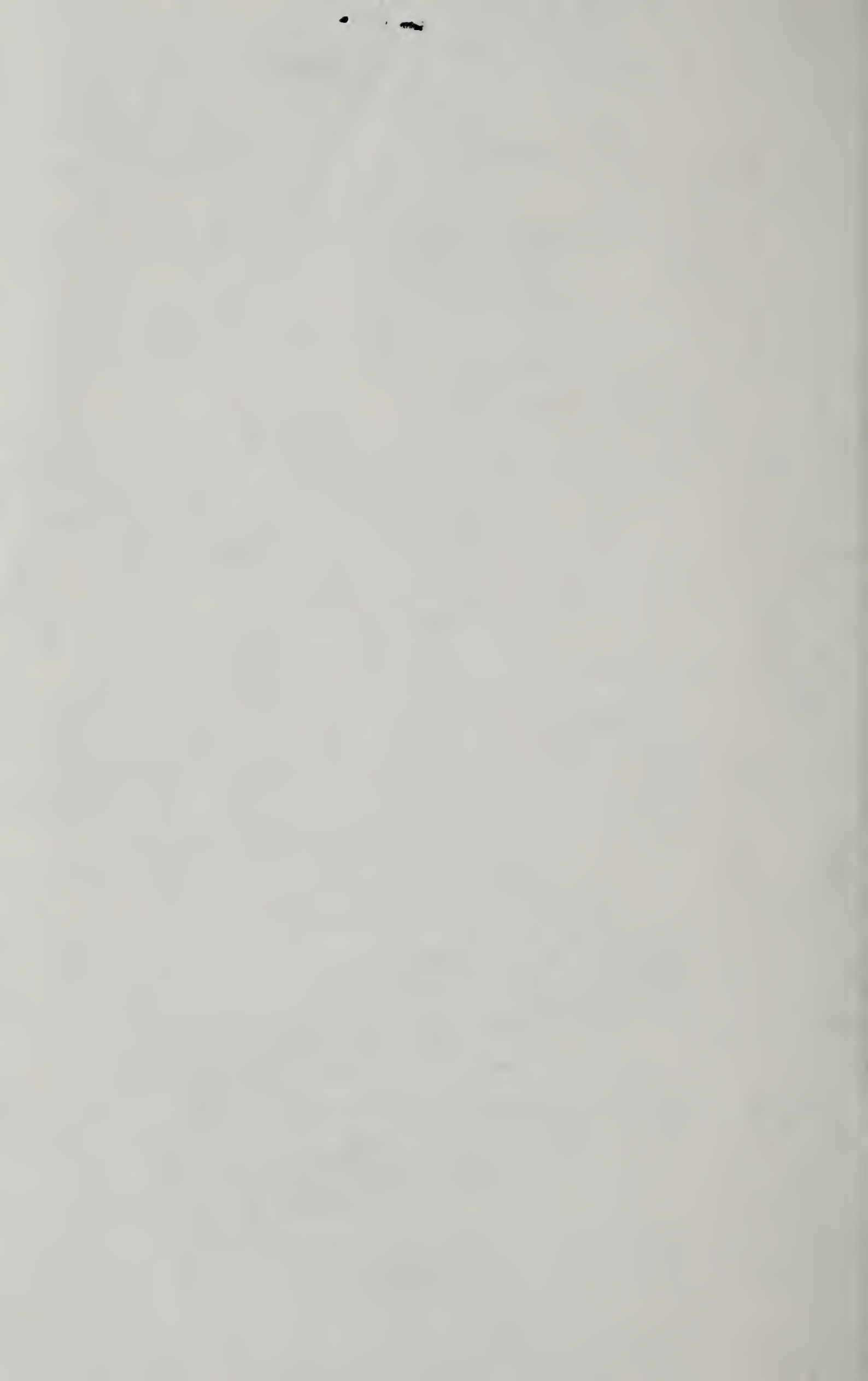
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Statement

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

Prepared for delivery by Richard T. Crowder, under secretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, before the Subcommittee on Wheat, Soybeans and Feed Grains, House Committee on Agriculture, July 31.

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to be back before you to discuss the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and to answer questions you have concerning the program and its management. I learned very early in my tenure here how important the program is to you and how concerned you are with its management. The program and the way it is managed are also very important to our farmers, the trade, our customers and our competitors.

Today I would like to discuss the following with you:

- recent EEP activity;
- the results of the department's study on the questions of cost effectiveness, budget neutrality and, additionality;
- the status and content of our review of future program objectives and management; and
- questions you might have.

From May 1985 through last Friday, 104 EEP initiatives had been announced, targeting 65 countries and 12 commodities. The total value of EEP sales to date is \$8.4 billion, with bonuses of \$2.57 billion in either Commodity Credit Corporation commodities or commodity certificates.

Since April 27, the date I last testified before the subcommittee, seven EEP initiatives have been announced covering five commodities to seven countries. Six of these initiatives have been announced in the past two months. Two things are happening with respect to EEP activity:

- first, the level of activity is picking up and,
- second, there is a greater balance among commodities.

Our objective is to get the maximum amount of trade policy leverage from each EEP bonus award made. This will be particularly important if Congress continues to reduce the program level.

In late 1988, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) undertake a study of the

EEP to assess whether the program was meeting its objectives and operational criteria.

The attribution of outlays to the program by the Congressional Budget Office was one of the factors prompting these questions, due in a large part to the program's budget neutrality criterion of the program. The questions from OMB were appropriate.

We have completed the study and it is attached to my testimony. It was conducted by a USDA task force representing several agencies and has a solid theoretical base and empirical evidence to support its conclusions. Since you have the study, let me highlight the results here.

The study concludes that the principal objectives of the EEP have largely been met. The program has challenged unfair trade practices, expanded U.S. agricultural exports and spurred trade negotiations.

The study also concludes that the EEP operational criteria generally have been met.

- The program has been targeted;

- Additionality of between 10 and 30 percent depending on market conditions and other factors has been achieved for U.S. wheat exports;

- Budget neutrality, although difficult to measure, has been demonstrated for wheat exports under the program by econometric analysis;

- There have been net economic benefits for the economy as a result of the program.

A third finding of the study was that program objectives and criteria need to be clarified and more closely related so that they do not work at cross purposes.

Going beyond this study, we have also analyzed what we feel are the appropriate objectives and method of operation of the program as we go forward. This analysis is now before the interagency group for review, and I would like to share with you some of the highlights of our proposal.

But first, let me comment on the input used in our analysis. We obviously were conscious of and considered the questions and concerns we heard from this subcommittee. We have spent a lot of time talking with commodity groups and with members of industry. These groups have had, and still have, a number of concerns about the program and its operation. And, while we may not have addressed them all, their input was valuable.

Our discussions with our competitors and customers about the program also influenced our thinking, particularly with respect to the importance of the EEP's trade policy objectives. Finally, we drew on the input from a broad group of experts in USDA and OMB. The proposals sent forth and highlighted below are USDA recommendations and we welcome your questions and comments.

The USDA proposal includes the following components:

- Focus the program primarily on trade policy and trade negotiation objectives. Once these trade policy objectives are achieved, the program should be phased out.

- Continue targeting the program to countries where there is unfair subsidized competition and where the EEP is needed to bridge the difference between subsidized prices offered by competing exporters and U.S. prices.

- Focus on commodities and countries where the United States can compete if trade subsidies are eliminated.

- Subsidy allocations will be commensurate with market price differentials, focused on trade benefits to help ensure that the program has minimal effects on budget outlays.

- Improve USDA procedures for the review, analysis and selection of individual EEP proposals.

- More responsive interagency approval process.

One final operating guideline that we have is to minimize the effects of the program on normal commercial marketing channels and practices. The intent of the program is to ensure the export competitiveness of U.S. agricultural commodities, not to replace or disrupt normal commercial marketing channels. While some market disruption is probably inevitable, efforts will be taken to ensure that it is minimal.

I would again point out that these proposals were sent to the interagency group only last week and we have not yet received approval. However, USDA believes these recommended changes will result in a more effective and efficient EEP.

During my last testimony before the subcommittee, the primary concerns were the future direction and operation of the program and who was responsible for managing it. I want to make four points in this regard.

First, we believe that EEP is an important trade policy tool.

Second, we feel we have proposed sound objectives and operating guidelines for the program.

Third, USDA is responsible for managing the program.

Fourth, we have received strong support from the interagency group in general and OMB in particular, regarding EEP initiatives.

In reference to a point I made earlier, I want to express my concern about the recent budget reconciliation action by the House Agriculture Committee to cap the EEP at \$500 million for 1990 to score budget savings. As you will recall, we had previously asked that no program ceiling be placed on EEP.

Capping the EEP sends the wrong signal to our competitors and reduces our flexibility to deal with changing market conditions. This, coupled with the fact that we do not know what actions our competitors will take in the marketplace, makes the cap very inappropriate.

In addition, the administration has scored the program as budget neutral and therefore OMB has indicated that it would not score any savings if the limitation is enacted since the original \$1 billion level was assumed to be budget neutral.

Finally, we at USDA are aware of the importance this subcommittee attaches to its oversight role for EEP. We welcome that. As responsible managers, we recognize the importance of and benefits from proper review and control procedures. In this regard, I would point out the following: We have our own review and compliance group. The USDA Inspector General is in the process of completing a study of EEP. The General Accounting Office also has a study underway. We plan to use the results of all of these to improve the management of the program.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer any questions.

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News Releases

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, July 27—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment.

Because the 1989 marketing year begins Aug. 1, the adjusted world price (AWP) for July 28-July 31 is calculated using the 1988-crop price support loan schedule of premiums and discounts. The AWP for Aug. 1 and the remainder of the 1989 marketing year will be calculated using the price support loan schedule of premiums and discounts in effect for the 1989 crop of upland cotton.

Based on data for the week ending July 27, the AWP and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 28 through midnight Monday, July 31, are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

Northern Europe Price	82.39
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.86
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.00
Average U.S. location	0.42
Sum of Adjustments	-14.28
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	68.11 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

Northern Europe Price	82.39
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	-78.00
	4.39
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	-4.15
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.24 cents/lb.

Since the AWP in effect for July 28 through July 31 is above the 1988-crop base quality loan rate of 51.80 cents per pound, the loan repayment rate for 1988-crop upland cotton during the period is equal to the loan rate adjusted for the specific quality and location. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Based on data for the week ending July 27, the AWP and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 1 through midnight Thursday, Aug. 3 are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price	
Northern Europe Price	82.39
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.86
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.20
Average U.S. location	0.39
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-14.45</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	67.94 cents/lb.
Coarse Count Adjustment	
Northern Europe Price	82.39
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-78.00</u>
	4.39
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.75</u>
	-0.36
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Since the AWP in effect for Aug. 1 through Aug. 3 is above the 1989-crop base quality loan rate of 50 cents per pound, the loan repayment rate in effect for 1989-crop upland cotton during the period is equal to the loan rate adjusted for the specific quality and location. The AWP will continue to be used to value upland cotton obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP in effect for Aug. 1 through Aug. 3 is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1989-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made Aug. 3.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

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USDA PROPOSES FEE FOR VOLUNTARY GRADING OF TOBACCO

WASHINGTON, July 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing a fee increase for voluntary, industry-requested grading of tobacco.

Kenneth C. Clayton, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposed increases would be from \$22.30 to \$29.45 per hour for basic grading service, from \$26.60 to \$35.15 per hour for overtime grading, and from \$33.34 to \$44.05 per hour for grading on Sundays and holidays. The new rates would include travel and administrative costs, he said.

The proposed increases would not affect mandatory tobacco inspection and grading or the programs at USDA-designated auction markets such as those for flue-cured, fire-cured, and burley tobaccos. The voluntary program is used chiefly by tobacco cooperatives receiving, processing, and storing tobacco under Commodity Credit Corp. loan.

The Tobacco Inspection Act of 1935 gives USDA authority to assess user fees for its tobacco grading programs.

Notice of the proposed fee increases will appear in the July 31 Federal Register. Comments and exceptions should be sent by Aug. 30 to the Director, Tobacco Division, AMS, USDA, P.O. Box 96456, Rm. 502 Annex, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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SHRINK ADJUSTMENT FOR 1988-CROP PEANUTS; COMMENTS REQUESTED FOR 1989-90 CROPS

WASHINGTON, July 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation announced today that a 2-percent shrink

adjustment will be allowed for the 1988 crop peanuts for handlers operating without a supervisor present.

The allowance is an adjustment to the quantity of peanuts otherwise required to be exported by handlers and is a method of accounting for loss in value of the peanuts during processing.

CCC is also requesting comments on a proposal for a 4-percent shrink adjustment allowance for these handlers for the 1989 and 1990 crop years. This is an increase from the adjustment allowed for prior crop years.

A non-supervised handler will be required to certify to the restricted use of peanuts in certain "other edible quality" grades as a condition for receiving the adjustments for the 1988 crop and, under the proposal, for the 1989 and 1990 crops. Otherwise, the handler's allowance will be limited to a 0.5-percent allowance.

Comments must be received by Aug. 10, and should include documents showing the basis of any recommendation. Send comments to: Director, Tobacco and Peanuts Division, ASCS/USDA, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20015. The comments will be available for public inspection in Room 5750-S of USDA's South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., during normal business hours.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787.

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USDA TO SPEED TEMPORARY ENTRY OF HORSES FROM CEM-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

WASHINGTON, July 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is amending its regulations to expedite the temporary entry of horses from countries affected with contagious equine metritis (CEM), a venereal disease of horses that affects fertility and breeding.

"To speed the temporary entry of foreign horses participating in U.S. competitions, we are eliminating the tests and treatments for CEM that USDA requires to take place in the country of origin," said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "Instead, we are requiring all owners or importers to comply with regulations on the movement and boarding of horses while they are in the United States."

“These safeguards are sufficient to prevent the introduction of CEM into the United States,” Glosser said. He added that the horse’s itinerary and changes to it must be authorized by the administrator of APHIS.

The regulations state that, except when in transit, the imported horse must be kept in a facility that is not a breeding operation, and separated from other horses. Also, any vehicle which is used to transport the horse must be cleaned and disinfected in the presence of an APHIS representative.

The final rule is scheduled for publication in the Aug. 2 Federal Register and is effective Sept. 1.

Janna Evans (301) 436-7279

#

USDA ISSUES FIRST PERMIT FOR GENETICALLY MODIFIED TREES

WASHINGTON, July 28—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued its first permit for field studies of transgenic trees to researchers at Iowa State University who are investigating a natural plant defense mechanism, which they have transferred to poplar trees from potatoes.

An understanding of the process may allow researchers to develop more efficient, pest-resistant trees in the future.

“The defense mechanism being studied saves the plant energy because it can be ‘switched on’ when the plant is actually being attacked by insects or other pests. If successful in poplar trees, the energy saving could be similar to the one you gain by being able to switch on a light only when you go into a room, rather than keeping it on continuously on the chance you may need it,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

ISU scientists Robert Thornburg and Harold McNabb will attempt to find out how and when the mechanism is activated in tests on 20 poplar trees, cloned for genetic uniformity. The tests, to be conducted in Ames, Iowa, will begin late this month and will continue until 1993, allowing the researchers to detect any changes in the system over more than one season. However, the genetically altered trees will not be allowed to bloom or produce seeds.

Thornburg also has transferred the defense mechanism to tobacco plants. That study, also permitted by USDA, is in its second year. In both the poplar trees and the tobacco plants, the researchers are measuring an easily detectable enzyme, chloramphenicol acetyltransferase—or CAT—that was transferred from the potato plant, along with the defense mechanism, and aids the researchers by telling them when it is operating.

APHIS reviews proposed experiments of genetically modified plants to examine their potential for introducing agricultural pests or significantly affecting the environment. No pest or environmental hazards have been found to be associated with the poplar tests.

Copies of the environmental assessment are available to the public by contacting Linda Gordon, Room 847, USDA, APHIS, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md., 20782. For more information on the studies, contact Robert Thornburg at (515) 294-7885 or Harold McNabb at (515) 294-2350.

Anita K. Brown (202) 436-7279

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HOW MUCH SOIL IS BLOWIN' IN THE WIND? COMPUTER MODEL GIVES ANSWERS

WASHINGTON, July 31—U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists are cranking up their computers to design a new way to predict—and help farmers nationwide prevent—wind erosion on crop and range lands.

By the mid-1990's, the scientists plan to have a wind erosion prediction system (WEPS) working on personal and main-frame computers, Lawrence J. Hagen reported today at an international meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Information from WEPS will help farmers meet conservation compliance requirements to maintain eligibility for U.S. commodity support programs, said Hagen, an agricultural engineer with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Hagen, based at the ARS Wind Erosion Research Laboratory in Manhattan, Kan., spoke at the annual meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

WEPS will help scientists make daily estimates of soil losses from wind erosion and can account for variability in time and space across a field, said soil scientist Ted M. Zobeck of the ARS Conservation and

Production Systems Research Laboratory in Big Spring, Texas. The system should also be helpful for managing rangelands and croplands in humid as well as dry areas, he said.

Hagen said those are some of the reasons why WEPS is more versatile than current versions of a cumbersome and outdated equation now used to predict annual soil losses from wind erosion on large fields in the Great Plains.

Drought was the main reason why wind erosion in the Great Plains reached its worst levels this past winter and spring since 1955, according to USDA's Soil Conservation Service. Wind erosion damaged 14.3 million acres from November 1988 through May, with two-thirds of the damage in three states: Kansas (5.1 million acres), North Dakota (2.3 million acres) and Texas (2.0 million acres). But, Hagen said, farmers using conservation practices averted the severe dust bowl conditions of the 1930's.

He said WEPS could someday be linked to other computer models to help:

- Compute effects of dust on acid rain processes,
- Predict reduced visibility from dust at airports and on highways,
- Calculate economic costs of erosion and
- Assess management strategies for public lands.

WEPS should help county-based SCS personnel—and farmers throughout the United States—predict how much erosion can be avoided by a specific management practice on small and large fields, Hagen said.

WEPS could also lead to improved ways for farmers to fight wind erosion. That's because it incorporates some of the new developments in erosion science which are helping researchers identify and quantify complex interacting conditions of weather, crop growth and decomposition, tillage practices, soil properties and erosion mechanics, he said.

“With completely new computer programming that includes submodels dealing with these conditions, we can apply our knowledge to a wide range of soil types and climates far different than those of the Great Plains,” Hagen said.

Zobeck is working on a WEPS submodel that embraces new concepts on how soil properties are involved in the erosion process. Cropping systems, tillage practices and climatic conditions are the main forces responsible for seasonal changes in soil properties, he said.

According to Zobeck and Hagen, semi-arid to humid croplands outside the Great Plains often threatened by wind erosion include much of the southeastern seaboard; sandy and organic soil areas of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota; lakebed soils of Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and North Dakota; the Palouse region of the Pacific Northwest and several irrigated valleys of California.

ARS studies at Manhattan several years ago showed that every inch of topsoil lost reduces average annual wheat yields by 5.3 percent, sorghum yields by 5 percent and corn yields by 6.3 percent, Hagen said.

Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011

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ORANGE IS THE COLOR OF A FLY'S TRUE LOVE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—The yellow, white, green, black and orange balls hanging among the tropical leaves and branches near Homestead, Fla., are not ornaments on a counterculture Christmas tree.

The collection of colored plastic spheres in the grove of guava trees are just the U.S. Department of Agriculture's way of finding out what attracts Caribbean fruit flies. John Sivinski, an entomologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, is trying to develop ways to monitor and control the fruit flies, and the multi-colored spheres are being tried. Sivinski is at the agency's Insect Attractants, Behavior and Basic Biological Research Laboratory in Gainesville, Fla.

Caribbean fruit flies are a major problem for the Florida grapefruit industry because some states and foreign countries require Florida fruit to be fly free before it can be imported, Sivinski said.

For instance, Japan, which consumed \$122 million worth of U.S. grapefruit in 1988, demands any fruit exported to that country be guaranteed uncontaminated. Previously, flies were eliminated by fumigating fruit with ethylene dibromide, which has since been banned by the Environmental Protection Agency as carcinogenic.

Sivinski and his co-workers at the University of Florida are looking for effective trap shapes and lures as well as colors to control the Caribbean fruit fly, which became established in Florida during the mid-1960s.

"What we've found so far is big and orange—they like orange spheres as big as eight inches in diameter best," Sivinski explained.

The color orange surprised Sivinski a little because the flies do not live in any large orange-colored fruit in Florida.

“In most cases, flies are attracted to colors that match natural food sources. For example, the papaya fruit fly is most attracted to a sphere that is green like a papaya but larger than its natural food,” Sivinski said. “And I don’t know why insects prefer larger sizes, but bigness seems to stimulate a sort of super attraction reaction. Maybe insects don’t have the mental machinery to know when something is too much of a good thing.”

Common hosts for the Caribbean fruit fly, in addition to grapefruit, are yard fruit trees such as tropical almond, Surinam cherry, loquat and guava that are often grown by homeowners.

“Actually, southern Florida might develop a commercial guava industry if we can find an economical way to control the Caribbean fruit fly. The fly really eats up guava fruit, which has hurt chances of that industry growing,” Sivinski said.

The fly’s propensity for hanging out in homeowners’ backyard trees makes it hard to control because the fly remains a problem even after growers treat the groves, according to Sivinski.

Currently, monitoring and trapping are done with conventional McPhail traps—glass bottles baited with “protein soup” as a lure. “The McPhail trap doesn’t do an effective enough job. Caribbean fruit flies aren’t captured by them in as large numbers as are other species of fruit flies in other kinds of traps,” he said.

Along with discovering what size, shape and color trap is most attractive, Sivinski and ARS chemist Robert R. Heath at Gainesville are also working on synthesizing the Caribbean fruit fly sex pheromone to use as a lure. Pheromones are chemical messages through which insects, and other animals, attract each other.

With the right trap, baited with a sex pheromone lure, Sivinski and his colleagues hope to precisely monitor the Caribbean fly population in both grapefruit groves and yard fruit trees.

“To go with that, we are looking for potential biocontrol methods to suppress the population once we can track it,” Sivinski said. “The ultimate goal would be to coordinate this work with existing fly-free zones from which grapefruit can be exported without needing to be decontaminated. By increasing the efficiency of our control systems we will be able to expand the fly-free zones.”

Kim Kaplan (301) 344-3932

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AUGUST CCC LOAN INTEREST RATE LOWERED TO 8-1/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Commodity loans disbursed in August by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 8-1/8 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, CCC executive vice president.

The 8-1/8 percent rate, down from 8-5/8 percent, reflects the interest rate charged by the U.S. Treasury in August.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, August 1—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 14.41 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 13.39 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 13.30 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 7.21 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$8.91 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$8.39 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$8.00 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made August 8, at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

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NEW USDA LAB TO FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGES

WASHINGTON, Aug 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has established a Climate Stress Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., to study how global climate changes may adversely affect crops.

“The threat of global warming and increased ultraviolet radiation, air pollution, drought and acid rain, taken individually or together, could seriously impact agriculture, possibly causing crop failures,” said R. Dean Plowman, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

“Laboratory researchers will study the mechanisms by which crops cope with such multiple stresses. The goal is to breed stress-tolerant plants, with the help of genetic engineering,” he said.

In addition to the new research at Beltsville, he said, ARS is conducting related climate-stress research at Raleigh, N.C., Gainesville, Fla., and Phoenix, Ariz.

A layer of ozone in the stratosphere helps protect living things against ultraviolet radiation from the sun and space. This layer is being depleted by a variety of gases including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) used in refrigerators, air conditioners and in the manufacture of some fast-food containers.

“Our new Beltsville lab is a direct response to concerns expressed by the administration and Congress,” he said. Congress appropriated \$700,000 for ARS research on the agricultural impact of projected increases in ultraviolet radiation.

At the same time, there is growing concern that carbon dioxide and ozone-depleting gases, including CFCs, are also inhibiting the escape of solar radiation from the Earth’s atmosphere that could cause an accelerated global warming, known as the greenhouse effect.

The laboratory is headed by Donald T. Krizek, an ARS plant physiologist who has done research on the effects of elevated carbon dioxide, ultraviolet radiation, drought and other environmental factors since 1966.

Krizek said that one of the most urgent needs facing the new laboratory is to uncover the biological secrets of plant tissue repair and plant stress tolerance mechanisms. “We intend to find out why some plants adapt to environmental stress better than others.”

In general, some plants tolerate ultraviolet (UV) radiation or air pollutants better, he said, because of still largely unknown physiological,

chemical and structural differences in those plants' ability to detoxify alien substances.

“Scientists must unravel the complexities of UV tolerance and natural repair processes in plant tissue to better understand how plants might be able to cope with increased UV radiation,” Krizek said.

Ultraviolet-sensitive plants include some pea, soybean, cucumber, wheat and blueberry varieties. Plant species more tolerant of UV include peanuts, rice, cabbage and alfalfa. Trees tend to be more tolerant than herbs, and shade plants more sensitive than sun-loving plants.

Krizek has been involved in several federal studies on UV radiation and ozone. He participated in the federal government's Climatic Impact Assessment Program, a Department of Transportation-sponsored study of the biological and climatic effects of stratospheric ozone reduction. In 1975, he and other agency scientists developed specifications for improved equipment for measuring UV radiation as part of a program funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Don Comis (301) 344-2773

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FOOD SAFETY EDUCATORS SHOULD EMPHASIZE COOLING, SAYS USDA

WASHINGTON, Aug. 2—Refrigerating foods in large, deep pots that cool too slowly is one of the riskiest food-handling mistakes, according to “A Margin of Safety,” a new U.S. Department of Agriculture report for food safety educators.

“We’d like to see food safety educators put more emphasis on rapid and even cooling of cooked foods,” said Lester M. Crawford, administrator of USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service. “If food handlers are hearing the message from all sides, they may take more care to refrigerate cooked foods in shallow, small, covered containers within two hours after cooking.” According to the report, such a practice could reduce foodborne illness.

“Most people seem to understand undercooking food is a big risk,” Crawford said. “However, many don’t understand that mishandling cooked food can be even riskier.”

According to Crawford, about 67 percent of home food handlers refrigerate cooked food such as soup or stew in the cooking pot or one

large container. Crawford said that if food has been undercooked or contaminated after cooking, cooling it too slowly could allow bacteria in the middle of the food to multiply to disease-causing levels. Studies of outbreaks and surveys of experts underscore the risk of this mistake, he said.

In addition to rapid and even cooling, “A Margin of Safety,” identifies other important food handling practices that are not used or are poorly understood, and suggests educational themes for food safety educators. FSIS will use the report as the basis for a new consumer publication and as a guide for future food safety education activities.

FSIS food safety educators, microbiologists, food technologists, and policy analysts contributed to the report. The analysis involved a literature search and surveys of expert microbiologists, consumer affairs experts in the food arena, and several members of the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods. Preliminary results from the Food and Drug Administration’s 1988 Diet and Health Survey provided current information on home food handler knowledge and the use of “safe food” practices.

Copies of the summary report for “A Margin of Safety” may be obtained from the FSIS Information Office, 1160-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 447-9113.

In addition to its inspection programs for meat and poultry, FSIS conducts food safety education programs in coordination with the Extension Service, FDA, and state governments. Questions about labeling or safe handling of meat and poultry may be directed to USDA’s toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sharin Sachs (202) 447-9113

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